The exploration of the history of the slogan «patris-thriskeia-oikogeneia» (fatherland, religion, family) is a byproduct of my research on conservative politics in 20th century Greece. In the process of this particular research, I became more and more interested in the micro-political circulation of ideology through the ordering function of language. Browsing through newspapers, periodicals, booklets and pamphlets of the nineteenth and early twentieth century in Greece, I gradually realized that specific words and concepts not only enable ideology to circulate but also pattern social actions and social relations. Catchwords and catchphrases, in particular, have their own complex, even contradictory origins and shifting meanings while they are sometimes turned into powerful political slogans exercising enormous influence on public opinions, attitudes and practices. In general, slogans, as a rhetorical device, have a rich history. They have provided historians with topical outlines of the major concerns, frustrations, and hopes of society. As “social symbols” they have united, divided, and even converted. In so doing, slogans have a direct link to social or individual action as well as to «a discursive conception of ideology», to put it in Stuart Hall’s words. Yet, little attention has been given to the rhetorical and persuasive nature of slogans. The ways catchphrases and slogans establish images and identities and convey a sense of belonging was, to my mind, of particular importance for my research project.

«Patris, Thriskeia, Oikogeneia» («Fatherland, Religion, Family») is one of the most familiar slogans in modern and contemporary Greece. Regularly associated with the politics and propaganda of authoritarian regimes starting from the Metaxas dictatorship up until the Colonels’ regime, its prior history has escaped our attention. Hence, it links to major ideological, social and political developments in modern
Greek history. I will try to sustain my argument by focusing on particular moments of importance for the formation, articulation, consolidation and circulation of this slogan. For reasons of clarification, I would like to say that my project does not refer to *the concepts as such*, that is to the various functionings of fatherland, religion or family in Greece’s long nineteenth and twentieth century. Rather, I am particularly interested in the slogan itself, that is I trace ideological currents, cultural practices, bio-political discourses as well as technologies and means of communication which contribute to the linkage of these concepts and to their mutual function.

The formation of an Orthodox Christian awakening movement in Greece in the last quarter of the 19th century played an important role in the re-working of the concepts of religion and family. Apostolos Makrakis (1831-1905), a charismatic and controversial theologian and preacher, was the leading figure of this movement which attempted to transform religion into a major social and political force and put it ahead of a mission for the renaissance of the nation. Makrakis was manifested upon the Greek nation during a multifarious epoch. Modernization processes gradually changed traditional beliefs and attitudes. And so Makrakis, wanting to contribute to the rebirth of the nation, regarded as the most basic element in this the rebirth of the Church, as the ark and instrument of the new national life. As a preacher, he was a new phenomenon in Greece. Although he confronted the official Church and was condemned by the Holy Synod, his vigorous religious movement became a popular phenomenon that shook the religious and national establishment of his time. Gradually even his disciples dissociated from him but without cutting off from the plan for a religious revival and salvation of the Greek nation. Makrakis' ideas and the particular pietistic ethos which he promoted however did survive in religious organizations and societies, which played a significant role in 20th century Greece. Societies and Brotherhoods including the *Anaplassis* (1886) or the *Patria* (1901), formed by former disciples of Makrakis, introduced in the late nineteenth century a campaign evolving around three axes: a. the critique of modernity from an Orthodox Christian perspective, b. the attack on new scientific theories, primarily darwinism and c. the protection of family from feminist and socialist threats. It was in this context, that associations of the family and religion became stronger while they were also connected to the fatherland.
The activities of religious organizations which focused on the critique of (western) modernity were the primary locus for the linkage of the fatherland with religion and with the traditional, patriarchal family. In their moral discourse, an idealized «traditional family» provided harmony to the entire society a constituted a persisting model for the nation. These religious initiatives became more apparent as major changes were taking place within the Greek society and politics. In the beginning of the 20th century, constant turbulence occurred in both the political system and the wider ideological and cultural scene. The identity crisis and re-appraisals of the Great Idea were rooted to the defeat in the Greek-/Turkish War of 1897, the raisin crisis, a major wave of transatlantic migration, the antiroyalist as well as anti-parliamentarist tendencies that emerged. Despite its multidimensional roots and causes, this identity crisis was mostly expressed within the domains of the «language question» while it became diffused through the variety and multiplicity of media, particularly the newspapers, periodicals and pamphlets circulating heavily in the era. Moral panics perceiving specific individuals, groups as well as ideas and practices as major threats for the community, social values and culture erupted in many occasions in the country in the first decades of the 20th century. As I said, these moral panics were mostly related to a deep identity crisis while their major impetus was provided mostly by newspapers and the technologies of the printed word. In the course of various eruptions including Evangelika (the Gospel Riots), Oresteika, I think that two major confrontations referring to educational reforms were central in the articulation and further diffusion of the slogan. Atheika (1908-1911) and Marasleiaka (1923-1925) provided the ground for major clashes wrapped up in the language debate. Although scholarly research on the language question in Greece is of particular importance and quality, especially in the last decades, I think that we can reconsider certain aspects of it. Atheika, for instance, have been normally related to the history of either the language question or of education. Yet, the characterization itself points to the crucial role of religion in these particular events while the huge debate they provoked about the education of girls, about gender and family orders and morality should make us perhaps rethink certain aspects of these events. The reactions against Alexandros Delmouzos’ (1880-1956) educational methods at the Higher Demotic Girls’ School in Volos only partially refer to language. They address a whole spectrum of criticism with reference to the implementation of new methods of pedagogy, courses of
hygiene and first aids, the content of the subject of religion. Yet, it goes unnoticed in many analysis that the reaction against educational reforms which are personified in Delmouzos basically refer to female figures including Penelope Christakou (1878-1951) in the case of Atheika and Roza Imvrioti (1898-1977) in the case of Marasleiaka. Both these unconventional female figures of the early 20th century became associated with the initiation of feminist ideas and practices while Imvrioti was also a Marxist. In the case of Atheika, it was primarily Christakou, not Delmouzos, that attracted the attention of the local Church with regard to the teaching of religion. A visit by the local bishop Germanos, and his confrontation with Christakou initiated a moral panic against the school, its teaching stuff, its teaching practices as well as the allegedly close ties between the School and the Labour Centre, thought to be a locus of marxist ideas and atheist propaganda. The moral panic which dominated initially in the town of Volos but soon in Athens, Patra, Nauplio was partly related to the «amplification spiral», to use Stanley Cohen’s terminology, formed by populist newspapers such as Kyrix or Script in Athens. Main emphasis of relevant publications was given to the potential destruction of family due to novel, feminist ideas as well as to the abandonment of traditional ethic due to the spread of marxist, materialist and atheist concepts. It was in this context, that the concepts of fatherland, religion and family acquired new connotations. Not only were they reflecting the critique of modernity that religious organizations and societies initiated at the turn of the century but they also provided a so to speak firewall against the spread of marxist and socialist ideas. The ideal traditional family which had previously surfaced in religious moral discourse intersected now not only with gender but also with class as it was portrayed as the guardian of property.

This particular point became clearer during the Marasleiaka where a marxist female teacher, Roza Imvrioti, was accused of teaching the history of the 1821 revolution without putting the proper emphasis on the national movement but undermining it at the expense of social causes. As part of the critique against Imvrioti related to her female nature which did not enable her to realize the masculine qualities of national wars as well as to her feminist ideas, the debate acquired more specific bio-political characteristics. Firstly, the discourse on fatherland, religion and family linked to the «feminization of the other», that is to an attempt to undermine political otherness, i.e.
marxism, by attributing to it feminine qualities. Secondly, it was in this context that the traditional gender images of the so called «patriotic maternity» which had dominated in the national discourse throughout the 19th century retreated at the expense of new images of national fatherhood and masculinity reflecting the overview of fascist biopolitics dominating in several European countries in the 1920s. This is a critical transformation not only of family images but also of the content of the concept of patriarchal family in the triplet I discuss in my paper today.

Language and educational reforms in the first half of the 20th century provided, in my opinion, fertile ground for the re-appropriation of gender images, social roles and practices and for the evaluation of new currents of ideas, including Marxism. It was in this context that «patris, thriseia, oikogeneia» acquired greater significance. Yet, it would not have dominated in the official discourse had it not been properly institutionalized as part of the official anticommunism of the era. The Brotherhood of Theologians Zoe, a semi-monastic Orthodox organization, played a critical role in this respect. Since its founding in 1907 by Efsevios Matthropoulos (1849-1929), a former disciple of Apostolos Makrakis, Zoe became engaged in an extremely intense network of activities in 20th century Greece, including teaching, preaching, publishing, leading school and youth groups, introducing the Sunday Schools. Following the Asia Minor War, the Brotherhood expanded its publishing program and distributed hundreds of thousands of Zoe sponsored publications. Especially after the death of its founder Efsevios Matthropoulos, his successors Dionysios Farazoulis (1882-1920) and Serafeim Papakostas (1892-1954) introduced a specific section on religion and family in the brotherhood’s weekly magazine. In it, they lamented the loss of traditional values in Greek society while they related them with the salvation of the nation, threatened by atheist communism. This was, in my opinion, the final stage for the consolidation of the slogan. Though its various usages in the Brotherhood’s public activities, it became linked to anticommunist propaganda acquiring in this way new connotations. The Brotherhood’s close ties with the right wing parties and the royal family in the fifties and sixties and the Colonels in the 1970s provided space for the inclusion of the slogan in the discursive and performative terrain of authoritative, right wing politics.
The formation of a slogan encapturing the core doctrines of conservatism i.e. traditionalism, patriarchal family, religious values and morality was not a Greek novelty. On the contrary, catchphrases and slogans of this particular kind started circulating from the mid-nineteenth century in various contexts as part of modern technologies of printing, of the emergence of mass politics and of the initiation of major propaganda campaigns. The Italian motto «Patria, religio, famiglia» for instance is attributed to Giuseppe Mazzini while it became heavily used in the early 20th century. Catholic women’s organizations acquired similar slogans in order to provide their own variations of gender images against secular feminism. The historian Anne Cova has extensively studied how catholic women conceptualized themselves «au service de l’église, de la patrie et de la famille» in the early 20th centuries. Fascists groups like Croix de Feu (1927) in France, on the other hand, employed the slogan «travail, patrie, famille» to illustrate their ethos. In this vein, let me come to my concluding remark: the slogan I discuss is based on a variety of popular sayings, catchwords and catchphrases circulating in Greece in the late 19th century. Their linkage became more apparent in the discourse of religious organizations of the era as part of their critique to secular, western type modernity. These first conservative connotations expanded as feminist and marxist ideas as well as new gender roles, family practices and life styles threatened traditional concepts in the mid-20th century. In this moment, the slogan also met fascist conceptualizations of the gender and national order. In its final phase, the slogan acquired a more official, anticommmunist undertone. Through its history, it is I think possible to identify the main principles of conservatism in 20th century Greece and to trace its crossings with fascist bio-politics in particular moments.